

Chosen Hill School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	136623
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	395345
Inspection dates	23–24 May 2012
Lead inspector	David Radomsky

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1409
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	370
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David McTeer
Headteacher	Sue Turner
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 June 2009
School address	Brookfield Road Churchdown Gloucester GL3 2PL
Telephone number	01452 713488
Fax number	01452 714976
Email address	pb@chosenhill.gloucs.sch.uk

Age group	11–18
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Introduction

Inspection team

David Radomsky

Additional Inspector

Ingrid Abrahams

Additional Inspector

Peter Clifton

Additional Inspector

Mary Hoather

Additional Inspector

Martin Marsh

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 47 lessons. These were mainly in Key Stage 3 and the upper sixth form as students in Years 11 to 13 were involved in examinations and Year 10 students were taking their end of year oral examinations in Modern Foreign Languages. Some observations were joint visits with a member of the school's senior leadership team. Inspectors held meetings with staff, students and four members of the governing body. They took account of the responses to the on-line survey (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work and analysed 503 parent and carer questionnaires. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including teachers' planning, the school and subject development plans, assessment information, safeguarding documentation and samples of students' work.

Information about the school

Chosen Hill School is larger than the average-sized secondary school. The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and whose first language is not English is below average as is that of students from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students who are supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below that found nationally. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school has a range of accreditations, including the International Schools Award and the Artsmark accreditation. The school converted to academy status in March 2011 and, in addition, has recently opened a ten place enhanced provision for students with extreme communication and interaction difficulties. There are currently two students working in the unit.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is not good because teaching does not ensure that students make better than satisfactory progress. Achievement is, therefore, satisfactory. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- The standards of attainment reached by students are above average and rising. From above average starting points this represents satisfactory achievement. There are variations in students' attainment and progress. In English and mathematics, students make mostly outstanding progress from Year 7 to Year 11 but, in other subjects, progress is slower especially for the most able.
- The sixth form is satisfactory. Students entering Year 12 have mostly average attainment. Due to satisfactory, but improving, teaching students make satisfactory progress and reach average standards by the end of Year 13.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Inspectors saw examples of good and outstanding teaching, and a small proportion that was inadequate. When teaching is no better than satisfactory, work is not always well matched to the needs of all students, particularly the most able, students are sometimes passive, the pace is often slow and marking is weak.
- Behaviour around the school and in lessons is good. Students have positive attitudes to school. Students say that they feel safe and that bullying, which is mainly name calling, is rare and is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. Attendance is above average.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are examples of leaders taking decisive actions to improve teaching, although inconsistencies remain as not all leaders monitor the quality of teaching with sufficient rigour and regularity. Performance management holds staff to account and recent professional development initiatives are beginning to raise the quality of teaching. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well. The curriculum provides students with many enjoyable and stimulating experiences.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2013, improve the overall quality of teaching from satisfactory to good or better by:
 - planning learning activities that meet students' differing needs and for students to have more opportunities to be active learners for the majority of every lesson
 - ensuring all students, particularly the most able, are consistently challenged in lessons
 - improving assessment, including the marking in books, to identify how well students are achieving, giving purposeful advice on how to improve and then allowing students time to respond to this advice.
- Develop leadership and management by:
 - ensuring all leaders use student performance information to identify any underperformance and plan for rapid improvements
 - ensuring that monitoring by all leaders is rigorous, regular and focuses sharply on the quality of teaching, assessment and learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students enter the school with above average skills and knowledge. Inspection evidence confirms that students' progress is satisfactory overall. The vast majority of parents and carers feel that their children make good progress. Sometimes, they make good, and even outstanding, progress when learning is well planned to match students' abilities and proceeds at a good pace. This was seen in a Year 7 English lesson on writing about changes in mood to create tension. The teacher used the opportunity of unseasonably hot weather to elicit descriptive phrases based on weather patterns to identify moods. The teacher then used a piece of her own writing which she asked the students to analyse and evaluate and, through well focused questioning of individual students and appropriate support, helped them deepen their thinking, use higher level vocabulary in an extended piece of continuous writing and produce a high standard of work. In a Year 13 mathematics revision lesson on algorithms, students made rapid progress in consolidating their prior knowledge through working together in small groups, teaching and challenging each other and by the teacher circulating and directing questions at individuals based on their individual strengths and areas for development. These kinds of suitably challenging activities for all students and well-paced learning are not yet the norm across the school.

The overwhelming majority of students say they are happy to come to school and feel that they learn a lot in lessons. Students are especially confident that they develop suitable skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. Students' progress in the sixth form is similar to the main school. Attainment at the end of Year 12 and Year 13 has improved over the past three years and is set to continue to rise

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in 2012.

There is variance in the rates of students' progress and in the standards of attainment reached in different subjects. For example, students consistently make outstanding progress in English and mathematics, and average progress in science subjects. In 2011, progress in languages, business studies, geography and physical education was low. Inspection evidence confirms the school's view that effective steps have been taken to improve learning in these subjects and attainment has improved and has risen significantly this year. There are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups of students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs, but there remains some underperformance by the most able as the proportion achieving the highest grades at GCSE is broadly average.

The students receiving enhanced provision make good progress against their individual goals and are learning to engage more widely in the mainstream curriculum. For example, one student recently won a prize in mathematics and another showed a sense of delight in sharing, with an inspector, the scientific facts that the student knows.

Quality of teaching

Inspectors found that, overall, teaching is satisfactory with some that is good and outstanding. The vast majority of parents, carers and students say teaching is good.

When teaching is at its best, teachers facilitate a range of dynamic learning activities that excite and engage all students. They plan for the needs of all students, set a good pace and extend thinking through effective questioning. Teachers make regular reference to grade and level criteria and encourage students to self- and peer-assess the quality of their work. When teaching is satisfactory, work does not challenge all students and is not matched well to individual needs across the ability range within a class. Students are passive for too long before becoming actively engaged in their work. Marking does not consistently make explicit what students need to do to improve their work and students seldom follow up on their teachers' comments. These features combine to limit the progress made in lessons and over time.

Good individual support given to disabled students and those with special educational needs by teaching assistants ensures they are able to engage well in lessons. The students receiving enhanced provision develop confidence to regularly work alongside other students in lessons. They make good progress as provision is adapted to their needs by the knowledgeable adults who support them well.

In many lessons across the curriculum, teachers promote pupils' personal development well. In a Year 10 science lesson on genetic engineering, students enthusiastically debated issues ranging from using jellyfish to make things glow, how diabetes might be cured and the implications of genetically modified foods. Students gain good social and cultural understanding through close links and reciprocal visits

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with students from many countries. During the inspection, a group of Chinese students hosted by the school joined lessons and worked together with students in Year 7 in preparing and recording a television type news item based on indigenous tribes around the world.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Inspectors found the students to be unfailingly polite and welcoming, emulating the excellent role models of the adults in the school. Students report that they feel safe. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers believe that students are safe and that behaviour is good, both during lessons and as students move around the school. Good behaviour was evident in lessons, break times and during lunchtimes observed during the inspection. The behaviour of students and the positive attitudes they demonstrate in lessons are major reasons why students are making at least satisfactory, and sometimes good or outstanding, progress. Behaviour does, however, dip on the few occasions when the quality of teaching is weaker and fails to engage students' interest.

Students feel very safe and believe that bullying is rare. Students are aware of the various types of bullying and they say that there is no racist, homophobic or cyber-bullying. They felt, though, that at break times some inappropriate name calling does occur, although it is usually without malicious intent. They are confident that when reported, their concerns will be dealt with swiftly.

The students receiving enhanced provision are making good gains in their social awareness which enables them to work alongside other students and cooperate well in tasks. They feel safe in school because they are treated with respect by other students and by adults.

Leadership and management

Senior leaders and the governing body have successfully established a strong ethos of inclusion where all are valued, welcomed and respected. They are assiduous in ensuring there is no discrimination. Parents are overwhelming positive about all aspects of the school's work. One parent, echoing the views of many, said, 'The school provides a well-rounded education with a strong emphasis on encouraging teenagers to become well rounded individuals, socially, morally, emotionally and academically.'

Subject areas are reviewed annually, and teachers are observed and held to account at least twice yearly as part of the annual performance management cycle. There is a well-developed programme of professional development to improve the quality of teaching, including collaborative moderation of work with staff from other local schools. Recently the school introduced a well-resourced strategy for further developing students' literacy across the curriculum. These initiatives have met with some success, such as improving the rates of progress in subjects that underperformed in 2011, but inconsistencies remain as not all teachers have fully

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implemented the new strategies and agreed policies for improvement.

The school has a sophisticated system for tracking students' progress and it is used effectively by some leaders to identify underperformance and provide appropriate support. This information though is not always used effectively by all leaders to identify areas for improvement and accounts for the uneven rates of progress students make in lessons. The inclusion leader gives clear direction to improving provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. There are suitable links to external agencies to secure additional help and support. Leaders of the enhanced provision and members of the inclusion team get regular feedback from adults on how the students are progressing and use this information to adapt provision.

The curriculum is adaptable and personalised and, with strong partnerships with other providers, allows students to follow pathways that best suit their aspirations and abilities, reflecting the school's very strong commitment to equal opportunities. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted through a wide range of extra-curricular activities and through charitable work, including the World Challenge overseas community project.

Since the previous inspection, the school has been successful in maintaining high attendance rates and a high proportion of Year 11 students attaining 5 or more A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics. Good behaviour and attitudes to work have also been sustained. The popularity of the sixth form has increased with 65% of Year 11 students now continuing into Year 12. Almost all of the other students continue into sixth form, further education, training or employment. Attainment at the end of Year 13 is rising steadily and the large majority of students continue to university. These successes demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve. The governing body is well led and effective in carrying out its statutory duties, including those relating to safeguarding and to tackling discrimination. The school meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding procedures and gives no cause for concern.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.

27 May 2012

Dear Students



Inspection of Chosen Hill School, Gloucester GL3 2PL

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave us when we visited your school. We greatly enjoyed talking to many of you. We took careful account of your views and those of your parents and carers who had completed questionnaires when we made our judgements. We found that your school is providing you with a satisfactory education.

The school offers you a wide range of learning pathways and we were extremely impressed by your good behaviour, courtesy and respect for all. You have some wonderful opportunities for participation in sport, music, charitable work and overseas visits to name but a few. Additionally, you make a strong contribution to the school's community through the many opportunities the school makes available to you to take on responsibilities.

We saw a wide range of lessons. In some your teachers help you make rapid progress in your learning, but in a significant minority your learning and progress are much slower than what you are capable of. As a result, attainment across subjects varies greatly and many of you who arrive at the school with high levels of attainment do not progress to get the highest grades in all your subjects. We have asked the school to improve the quality of teaching so that you are always challenged fully, that the work is well matched to your abilities and that you can get plenty of opportunities to learn actively. We have also asked the school to make sure your books are marked well and show you how to improve. You can help by responding to your teachers' comments and by keeping your books neatly presented with work fully completed and up to date.

Your headteacher, staff and governing body want you to achieve well and do your very best. We have asked them to improve their monitoring procedures to ensure that you consistently receive high quality teaching. Staff care for you very well which is why almost all of you who filled in the student questionnaire said that you enjoy the school and feel very safe.

We wish you all the best for the future and thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

David Radomsky
Lead inspector

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